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ABSTRACT

To understand the goals and methods of writing instruction in Samoa and Tonga, a study involved (1) a survey of the literature on communication in those countries, (2) an interview of 40 Brigham Young University-Hawaii Campus students from those two island nations, (3) travel to Samoa and Tonga to interview teachers, (4) a survey of instructional materials, (5) an examination of textbooks and yearly teaching plans, (6) observation of English classes, and (7) collection of writing samples. The analysis of writing behavior and writing instruction included observations of writing attitudes, writing habits, and cognitive skills, and also considered the New Zealand School Certificate Exam--the major instrument of academic evaluation in Samoa and Tonga--which has an adverse effect on teaching practices. Findings of the study indicate that writing is perceived as a school skill, the culture places a higher value on speaking and listening than upon writing, students learn English while they are learning to write in English, and students operate with limited awareness of communication patterns and strategies. Also, writing tasks are undertaken at one sitting with a definite time limit; much emphasis is placed on form, expression, and correctness; and cognitive skill is the weak domain in these students' writing. To help students, teachers need to know what students think about writing and what has been taught to them in the past. (SRT)

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SECONDARY WRITING INSTRUCTION IN SAMOA AND TONGA

The problem I set out to investigate is how writing instruction in a foreign student's home country influences the way he or she perceives our writing instruction and performs on our writing assignments. My institution, Brigham Young University-Hawaii Campus, offers an excellent place to study this problem. In particular, I wanted to learn about students from Samoa and Tonga. Have these students already had the kind of instruction we give, or have their secondary teachers conceived of and taught writing competence in different ways than we do? Have they emphasized different elements? Do students undertake composition tasks differently than we do? How do they establish priorities among the cognitive, rhetorical, and linguistic demands of writing? We are ignorant of the answers to these questions. These students often take four and even five English courses at Brigham Young University-Hawaii Campus, yet we don't know whether we are reploughing the ground their teachers cultivated in high school or blazing into in strange, new lands.

Watching these students, we are in somewhat the same position as a person who puts quarters in a soda machine, sees

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the cup fall crooked in the slot, and stands helplessly while the machine pours ice, syrup, and soda water over it. We know perfectly well what is happening, but we don't know how to account for the results, or what to do about it except to coax the machine--or bang on it. I don't mean by my analogy that students from Samoa and Tonga write poorly, just that students from any one geographical area tend to pose a few consistent strengths and problems different from those of students from other areas. My project attempts to help us teach people from the South Pacific by making us familiar with the educational factors that condition their performance. In other words, I want to open the soda machine, to examine what previous teachers put in there, and to see if we can trace the operating patterns that cause the machine to function--or malfunction--in predictable ways.

To understand the goals and methods of writing instruction in Samoa and Tonga I surveyed literature on communication in those countries and interviewed forty BYU-HC students from those two island nations. I then travelled to Samoa and Tonga to interview teachers, survey instructional materials, examine textbooks and yearly teaching plans, observe English classes, and gather writing samples.

FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION

I was looking for three dimensions of writing practice: writing attitudes, writing habits, and cognitive skills. By cognitive skills, I mean those mental operations "by which people

acquire, store, and use information."[1] These operations require both structures for information and processes for its acquisition, storage, and use. Together, these dimensions of attitudes, habits, and cognitive skills allow for fairly comprehensive analysis of writing behavior and writing instruction. The questions I sought to answer for each dimension follow.

1. Writing Attitudes.

   How is writing viewed affectively?

   What value is placed on writing in the student's culture?

   Is writing perceived primarily as a school skill, or as one useful throughout life, both professionally and personally?

   Is "good writing" viewed in fixed terms of form and correctness or in fluid terms varying with the occasion, audience, purpose, etc.?

2. Writing Habits.

   In what circumstances do students usually write? What are the constraints of their writing activity in terms of time, setting, assignment, number of drafts, etc.?

   What kinds of assignments do students write most?

   Are writing habits product-oriented or process-oriented?

   What stages of the writing process are taught directly and what stages and skills are assumed or ignored? Specifically, does instruction include assessment of

communication purpose, sensitivity to audience needs and expectations, techniques for invention and discovery of ideas, methods of organizing, ways of revising and polishing?

On what aspect of writing do students focus most of their effort? On ideas, on correctness, on expression?

3. Cognitive Skills.

Given bodies of facts, how will students tend to organize them for assimilation or communication?

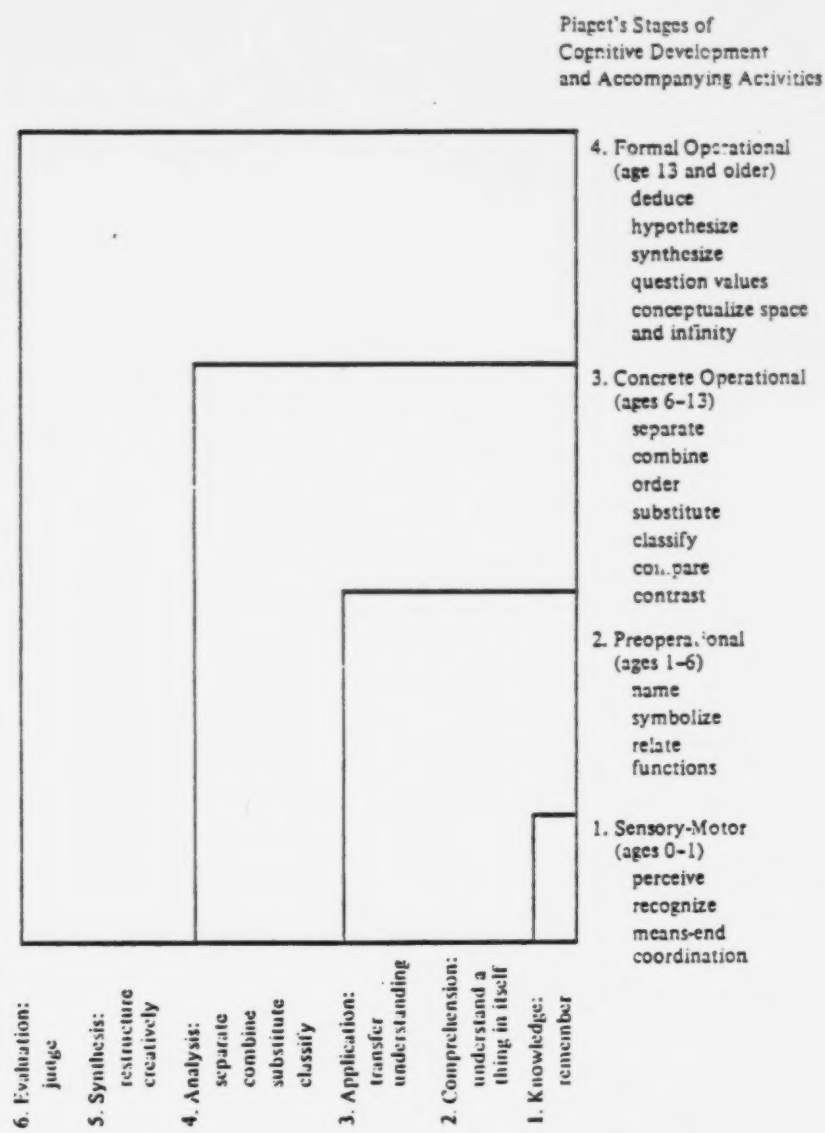
What mental operations do students perform most easily? With which operations do they appear to have problems?

Can problems in organization, in relating ideas, and in adapting to different communication stituations be traced to failures in lower level cognitive skills, i.e. such skills as separation, application, definition, and so forth?

What cognitive skills are most requently reinforced or exercised by assignment topics, instructional materials, and methods?

In order to assess cognitive proficiency, I used an informal scheme of mental skills adapted from the work of Jean Piaget and Benjamin Bloom as shown below. This scheme identifies a number of separate mental skills that build upon each other to allow mastery of more complicated tasks. Lower skills are generally mastered earlier and in turn enable higher skills to develop.

For example, a person who has trouble separating elements out of a context and combining them will have trouble synthesizing, which seems to require both separation and recombination.



Bloom's Cognitive Levels and Accompanying Skills

A model of the interrelationships between the cognitive theories of Benjamin Bloom and Jean Piaget.

From Rita Phipps, "Teaching ENG 101 along Natural Lines: The Structure of a Curriculum Based on Learning Theory," in Structuring for Success in the English Classroom, Classroom Practices in Teaching English, 1981-1982 (Urbana, Ill.: NCTE, 1982), pp. 33-39.

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A NOTE ON THE IMPACT OF THE NEW ZEALAND EXAMS ON CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

A thorough understanding of secondary writing instruction in Samoa and Tonga can't be achieved without taking into account the New Zealand School Certificate Exams administered to students in the Form Five (corresponding roughly to the American twelfth grade). These tests separate those who go on in their studies from those who leave school, repeat courses of study, or emphasize vocational subjects. The tests are the major instrument of academic evaluation, and they are viewed indices of a school's success or lack thereof. A school with large numbers of students sitting exams and a high percentage of passes is interpreted throughout the country as a high-quality school. For individual students, passing scores are evidence of personal achievement. More important, since passing scores open educational doors that would otherwise remain closed, a great deal of pressure comes down on teachers to prepare their students well for the exam, and on individuals to master the skills covered by the tests.

In practice, this pressure influences teachers to teach the test. In fact, at the schools I visited, practice tests are an important part of the teaching plan. Teachers use them as instructional devices and as diagnostic tools for further instruction. They select textbooks written expressly as test preparation aids, and they incorporate generous amounts of coaching on test-taking strategy--explaining, for example, which kind of writing topic to choose and which to avoid. To an

extent, it might be said that English courses in Form Five, at least in the academic tracks, become courses in how to pass the School Certificate Exam.

As screening instruments, the exams have their positive side. The English Exam tests a variety of reading, language, and writing skills that show mastery of language. The exams even allow passing scores for students who are strong in only a few skills but weak in the others. (Theoretically, a student can receive a passing score merely from the comprehension section, which counts only thirty out of a hundred marks.) In practice, however, the exams reduce much teaching to drill and form practice. The more able teachers see beyond the test and expose their students to a wide range of language and literary experiences which then serve the student on the test, but less able teachers, who are often less cognitively mature than their able counterparts, use the English test as the definition of language skill and design most of their instruction to fall within test parameters.

Some evidence exists that the exam system is weakening in New Zealand. Last year, the University Entrance Exam, formerly administered at the close of Form Six to students desiring to enroll in university, was abolished. Some erosion of confidence in the School Certificate Exam is also evident, but little initiative can be expected from the South Pacific Islands that

follow the New Zealand system. Rather, it can be expected that they will follow the lead of New Zealand, and for now this means retaining the School Certificate Exam.

FINDINGS

With the importance of New Zealand exams in mind, we can now move to the observations I have made from interviews, visits, surveys of instructional materials, and analysis of student writing.

Attitudes

1. Writing is perceived as primarily a school skill whose purpose is to show mastery of acquired knowledge in correct form and language. While people in these countries view correct writing as one of the highest evidences of an educated person, very few students anticipate having to write in order to define problems, solve them, and communicate their solutions on the job. Few students perceived writing as a fulfilling activity to be pursued on its own, and almost none perceived writing as a means of discovering and understanding. In general, the role of writing in discovering or understanding new points of view is given scant--or no--attention. Additionally, the British form of education, at least as applied in the South Pacific, tends to encourage mastery of material but not the transfer, application, and synthesis of that material. Overstating, I would say that students expect to be told what the facts are, how a precedure is to be performed, why things are the way they are, and then to remember the facts. They perceive the role of authority to be

one of transmitting "the answers," and they are not prone to question or to entertain alternate points of view.

2. Most students feel more satisfied with their ability to generate ideas for a writing task than with their ability to organize and express them. This finding constituted one of the major surprises of my research. My evaluation of South Pacific student writing led me to perceive the lack of ideas as the most significant weakness. I saw this weakness as prior to those of organization and expression, but the students do not perceive the problem in this way. Even though the graders of New Zealand exams place the heaviest emphasis on the content and not the form of writing samples, most students believe the solution to the content problem is to choose the right topic, not to develop discovery and analytical skills that will help them think through new problems. Perhaps we can attribute this confidence in their ideas to cultures that exhibit fairly authoritarian social structures and that stress group consensus in decision making (traits that are especially true of Samoan culture). Most students appear to believe that the important ideas of their communities have been successfully transferred to them and that these ideas give them a reservoir of valid axioms and points of view upon which they can draw. While instructors at BYU-HC share and endorse many of the values and beliefs of our South Pacific students, we must also view the above attitudes as a potential limitation on their desire and ability to explore, understand, and assimilate new ideas.

3. Tongan and Samoan cultures place a higher value on speaking and listening than upon writing. The occasions upon which recognition and status can be achieved by writing are far outnumbered by those in which immediate status and recognition can be achieved through speaking and listening. This is not to say that students have no awareness of the need to write outside of school. Job advertisements in the local newspapers frequently specify writing ability as a condition for employment, and letter writing is a regular practice for those whose families are separated. But in general, students feel more confident in live situations of speaking and listening than in reflecting and composing, which are most often done in absence of the immediate give-and-take of conversation.

4. Attitudes toward form, content, and language are shaped partly by the fact that students are learning English while they are learning in English. Since writing instruction is given almost solely in English rather than in the student's native language, the student is forced to wrestle with concepts of form, relations of ideas, and style, concepts that challenge the minds even of students who learn in their native language. And since writing is the visible sign of mastery of the new language, expression and correctness take precedence over the development of ideas. Students worry about the same things we worry about when we are learning another language, and it is important for us to keep this perspective in mind.

5. As a result of the relatively little exposure they have to written communication in real life, students operate with

limited awareness of forms and strategies. By "forms" I mean different communications patterns, inductively acquired from experience, from which appropriate patterns for the task at hand may be selected. Briefly stated, an understanding of forms is the ability to project, at the beginning of a writing task, what a finished product might be like, and the ability to see alternative means for achieving one's purpose. School Certificate Exams do not help this lack of variety. The two expository writing tasks on the exam are "formal writing" and "informal writing," without much differentiation between them. Both allow for narrative-descriptive-expository writing, but one test section offers topics that are more objective and non-personal. Even on the formal task, South Pacific students are apt to choose (and be coached to choose) topics of a familiar and even personal nature because teachers know they can provide enough content and impose satisfactory order upon that content.

Habits

Because writing habits are so bound together with cognitive skills, I will here try to describe those circumstances of writing practice that guide the effort itself rather than shape the content or material of writing.

1. The vast majority of all writing tasks are undertaken at one sitting with a definite time limit. Of this majority, the bulk take place in class, with a minor proportion performed at home, usually overnight. Consequently, students have little awareness of the need to develop a piece of writing over time with successive drafts. They usually do not comprehend the

potential they have for more efficient, convincing writing, potential that is held confined by one-shot, compose-and-correct writing habits.

2. As a consequence, that which we refer to as the writing process, (that is, a recursive series of mental operations leading from conception of purpose to a final draft, a process involving goal setting, selection of means, and assessment of means by their contribution to achievement of goals) is a truncated process in which some steps are either skipped or performed as part of another, sometimes subordinate step. These students are familiar with in-class writing, more so than I would have guessed, and the practice of in-class writing carries over into the other writing they do. They tend to perform their writing in circumstances that overload their initial writing steps with later concerns of form and polish. Thus, students have to worry about generating ideas in the very act of thinking how to express them, organize them, connect them, and correct them. I am not arguing against in-class essays. I think that some practice in this writing environment is important. The problem comes from the fact that most of these students are conditioned to think of writing primarily in this way.

For example, the act of revision, in the sense of "re-vision," is almost non-existent. Students have little practice revising, and partly as a result of that and partly as a result of cognitive factors, they lack skill in assessing and reformulating. They often do not have the conception of purpose and means required to perform this operation, so they reduce

revision to the correction of errors. Teaching practices appear to ignore this problem. Of the teachers whom I interviewed, many required that papers be corrected for grammar and mechanics, but only one required successive drafts and content revisions before the final, graded version.

3. A weighty part of the writing process appears to be the concern for the artificial form of paragraphs and essays. By artificial form, I mean the prescribed structure for various kinds of paragraphs or compositions. Both teachers and students strive for paragraphs with topic sentences and related details. At the essay level they emphasize distinctions--not always clearly maintained and not always based in experience--between descriptive essays, narrative essays, and expository essays. Textbooks reinforce this concern by advising students, in planning their essays, to plan the kind of essay they are going to write.

4. Textbooks used in Samoa and Tonga, mostly from New Zealand, tend to ignore problems in the writing process to devote their instruction to form, expression, and correctness. A few books give lip service to the planning stage of writing, but none gives practical suggestions on how to generate ideas, how to organize them, or how to revise them. Textbooks were generally good and often excellent in posing a variety of comprehension and thinking problems, but impoverished in offering guidance on the problems that plague these students the most. The flavor of many textbooks can be savored in this sentence from a fifth form textbook: ". . . remember, a longer composition is only a good

thing if you are making fewer mistakes than when you started this course." The same textbook begins with a long citation from an authority on the importance of having something to communicate and on structuring classroom situations "which reproduce as closely as possible the features of a real-life communication situation."[2] I assume the textbook author and I interpret those phrases in radically different terms, since his book almost systematically avoids giving students help either in having something to say or in eliciting communication in life-like situations.

Cognitive Skills

This domain is, of course, most subject to an observer's assumptions and biases. It is not directly observable but must be inferred and interpreted through a comparison of observable traits with a schema of cognitive development that may not itself be completely valid. But even with these limitations, we have much to gain from careful assessment of our students' skill levels because this domain is the foundation for other skills. For example, a person's ability to respond to a communication situation hinges on his or her skill in perceiving problems, separating elements out of a whole situation, defining important terms, applying one set of particulars to another, generating hypotheses that explain assembled particulars, organizing, and so forth. Even to perceive that one idea is more general than another and to see the one idea connects with another require that one already have the prior subskills and also the mental categories that differentiate ideas by those orders. Therefore,

even though this domain is the most complex, it is also the most important. From my discussions with students and their teachers and from my assessment of writing samples I have formed the following observations.

1. Cognitive skill is the weak domain in these students' writing. The categories and processes which many of them employ seem to hinder the full implementation of the writing process as we think of it and hinder systematic analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In particular, they lack skill in extracting and manipulating information in alternate ways, in defining communication goals, in finding and exploiting appropriate means to those goals, and in evaluating their own success in light of their goals.

2. The level of general knowledge of the world is low. Of their own world, students are very knowledgeable, but they often lack knowledge of geography, history, science, and so forth. This lack, I believe, limits cognitive skill because these bodies of knowledge carry with them different means of categorizing and comparing information.

3. Most Samoan and Tongan students are comfortable with writing tasks that offer "natural" organizational patterns. By natural patterns, I mean simple comparisons, short descriptions, and chronological patterns such as process and narration. More extended comparisons--for example, those carried out systematically on a number of dimensions of likeness or difference--and more extended description are likely to lapse into narrative.

The story pattern is probably the most basic schema for organizing and conveying information, and these students use it whenever they can. Frequently, the narrative frame leads them away from the purpose of the topic. When the topic does not lend itself to these (and most topics can be handled with these patterns) grouping and ordering frequently become confused.

4. In keeping with the above, students display a certain amount of "field dependence"--that is, an inclination to operate mentally and perceptually in terms of a whole situation without abstracting and separating elements of it. Thus, when given a writing task on a subject, they are inclined to treat the subject in the whole way they perceive it rather than entering the subject at this or that analytically separable point and relating other elements of the situation to that point.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Most of the observations I have made pose challenges to the teacher. Students who perceive writing as a school-bound skill for the demonstration of mastery over learned material, or as merely demonstration of language mastery, will probably misperceive the very intention of some writing courses and assignments. Those who write long papers in a series of one-draft, forced sections and who are confused about how to reorganize, emphasize, and link their ideas are doomed to hand in work that is the equivalent of a good writer's first draft, no matter how much time they spend poring over the verbs or taking it desperately to the writing lab for assistance. And students

who cannot achieve a position of choice among alternative ways of selecting, ordering, and expressing their ideas will achieve only limited growth. Until their minds go beyond assimilating new information in familiar patterns but rather achieve new patterns that can accommodate new and old information, they will not reach the level of ability implied in the goals of university study. Fortunately, the mere perception of these problems suggests means by which they may be solved, although long experience cautions us against easy and quick solutions.

Fortunately, also, these students come with many strengths of mind and character that serve them in and out of school. Although my observations in the preceding section consist mostly of limitations, these students come with many positive abilities. Most have written more than their counterparts from the United States. Their motivation is high. Their educational background has trained them to seek and retain facts. Some are brilliant and need only the triggering of a new idea or model. Few fail to show growth, even when we ignore their particular needs in the design of our instruction. It is the nature of knowledge and the human mind to interact together to the advancement of both. Therefore, the suggestions I offer below are given as guides to potential improvement, not as urgent solutions to a problem that would otherwise go unsolved.

Attitudes

The best ways to improve writing attitudes are to teach writing in a problem-solving framework, to demonstrate in practice the power of writing as an instrument for intellectual/emotional exploration, and to show the application of writing skills. By teaching and assigning essays in a problem-solving framework, we take students somewhat out of the school-assignment frame of mind and confront them with realistic situations that elicit writing with a practical purpose. Such situations, as one proponent points out, "have an obvious purpose within their context and . . . demand the elements of good writing as much as conventional themes or essays."[3] Additionally, they make success or failure, and the consequences of each, much more obvious than do conventional themes. We need not build our entire writing courses around these practical situations in order to get the benefits of them. A few well designed assignments in the course of the semester, together with instruction that grows out of the assignments instead of out of *a priori* rules for good writing, can be very effective in getting the message across. Such assignments abound in numerous "favorite assignment" articles and publications. At least one book, *Cases for Composition*, by John Field and Robert Weiss, offers an entire series of realistic writing situations.

The power of writing as an instrument for exploration and discovery can also best be demonstrated in practice. In fact, very little good can come from preaching to students on this point. Unless they see the results in their own discoveries,

they will not benefit from hearing it. I have found many students are skeptical of their ability to discover or invent worthwhile ideas through open-ended techniques. These techniques go against their attitudes. That is the whole point. Therefore a teacher has to stick with a technique, offer alternatives, and encourage free exploration. The most appropriate way to let them see it, I believe, is to provide them with a wide variety of heuristic devices for exploring a topic or question and then to see that they implement the techniques in the idea-gathering stage of their writing. Freewriting is certainly one technique that deserves to be used. The writer/teacher Donald Murray has also urged teachers to practice these techniques with and in front of their students.[4] In this way students can see the tentative nature of the exploratory process and can also see that it brings results. If teachers share their exploration in such a manner that students see that there are periods of uncertainty, of groping, of seeming dead-ends, they go away with a healthier image of the writer as explorer, an image they can realize in their own efforts.

Habits

Habits can be altered and improved so that our students increase the probability of successful writing. I suggest the following strategies:

We can allow--or better still, require--students to stick with a writing task through several drafts before reaching closure on a grade. In particular, I recommend adopting some version of the Garrison method, a tutorial method for eliciting

successive drafts of one writing task.[5] The key to this method is that the teacher guides the student by drawing to his or her attention only those problems that inhibit the next phase of development of a satisfactory final product. These problems are raised in a sequence so that early problems are resolved before later ones are even discussed. For example, on a first draft, the teacher makes no comments concerning organization and style and polish unless the essay is already clearly about something and has sufficient information or raw material in it to enable a successful later draft based on the ideas present in that draft.

One premise of the Garrison method is that students master only those skills that they can actually incorporate into their own writing, no matter how much time the teacher spends discussing and demonstrating them. The method places the emphasis on learning through writing--that is, through solving the problems that arise out of one's own writing and not those laid out in a textbook.

Aside from incorporating good drafting habits, we can better enable students to perform the operations required at different stages of the writing process. We should go beyond commenting on the paucity of ideas to teach and practice methods of generating and discovering suitable ideas for a writing task. We should go beyond well planned discussions of organization and beyond requiring outlines. Rather, we should teach the skills necessary before one can make a true outline. Above all, we need to enable students to perform the kind of analysis that leads to meaningful revision, a kind of analysis that is a sizeable challenge to

these students. My experience with these techniques reveals to me that cognitive maturity or immaturity shows itself more clearly in these activities than anywhere else. It follows that we should spend more class activity here at the roots than we may formerly have done.

Cognitive Development

The first thing we need to do is admit how little we can do in one semester. At most, we can nudge students upward, but we shouldn't expect to accomplish more in three months than has occurred in eighteen years. Development is a slow process. We also need to acknowledge our relative ignorance of what makes cognitive maturity and of how to stimulate it, and along with that, we should acknowledge the arrogance of undertaking to help twenty-five students of different nationalities develop each in his or her appropriate way. Yet, as arrogant as it is, we know that is part of our job.

We also have to admit that cognitive development already occurs in the exposure our students get to a succession of college teachers and subjects, each with different demands and methods. Perhaps a well planned cognitive sequence could accomplish no more than we accomplish by exposing students to the rich slice of life they find when they try to satisfy four or five very different instructors each semester.

Still, we should employ methods that will help us avoid merely demanding what students are unprepared to give. First, we can and should examine our assignments carefully to discover the kinds of cognitive skills necessary for successful completion.

Then we should allow class activity to prepare students to meet the demands placed upon them by assignments. For example, I asked one class to read Hemingway's "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and Fitzgerald's "Babylon Revisited" to answer the question: Whose lesson is more profound--Francis Macomber's or Charlie Wales'? That simple comparison question is not so simple as it first seems. It requires many separable cognitive operations. It requires interpretation of whole stories first of all, then separation of a "lesson" out of a narrative and definition of that lesson. Next, it requires a working definition of "profound" so that a person has some criteria upon which to measure the two lessons. Then it requires comparison--not of one lesson to the other (a mistake made by many less cognitively mature students) but of each lesson with the criteria and evaluation of each lesson in light of criteria. Then the assignment further requires establishment of communication goals and a method of organizing the material for that goal, and further separating and relating of elements in the stories that reveal the nature of the lessons and their relative profundity. I don't suggest that we lecture about these operations or that we try to cover all of them, but I suggest that without some planning and activity on our part, a large fraction of our students will turn in papers that merely narrate two stories in summary form and then close with a perfunctory statement that Charlie Wales learned a more important lesson than Macomber because he was trying to keep his child, while Macomber was killing animals.

Beyond tailoring some prewriting activity around skills implicit in our assignments, we can make ourselves aware of and then employ techniques for improving cognitive skills. Some of these techniques guide the student through communication or problem-solving situations in such a way that cognitive skills are never mentioned directly but develop and refine as a by-product. I am thinking in particular of George Hillocks' observing and writing techniques which, at least in his own studies, lead to writing that is judged more convincing and more organized and even more creative--all without the mention of organization or paragraph structure or creativity.[6] Hillocks provides one avenue to the core of cognitive problems we find among our students when he says, "It is almost intuitively obvious that if a writer knows how to produce effective syntactic structures, how to write for a given audience, how to organize, and so forth, but does not know how to conduct the inquiry which will be the basis for his essay, then the resulting essay will almost certainly be trivial and inconsequential."[7] Hillocks' methods confront students with the need to observe data in order to account for their nature or causes, to form hypotheses of explanation, to test these hypotheses in group situations, and then, only after the careful work of comparing and validating, to communicate them.

Through the use of Garrison techniques (discussed earlier) we can awaken our students to "revision" as "reformulation" by adopting their communication goals in a piece of writing and then helping them assess the methods they have used to achieve them.

Too often revision means only correction to students who as yet do not perceive alternate ways of accomplishing their tasks. One of my most satisfying memories of last year is of the sessions I spent teaching a man to evaluate his drafts for revision. For example, in one essay addressed to local parents on the benefits of a new youth rugby league, he included a vivid paragraph on the injuries and danger of rugby. He was putting in the essay any material that attracted his attention without evaluating its contribution to his goal. As we examined his goal and methods, I remember seeing signs that his mind had leaped over barriers that discouraged him for years. He showed similar learning with regards to the sufficiency of raw material and its organization.

Most colleges that accept foreign students assume that all we need to know about their writing is how well they do it. But placing them at an appropriate level is only half our responsibility. To help them improve beyond their current skill levels, to help them master the art of communicating and not merely that of proofreading, we need to know not only what students can do but how they think about writing. I have shown that in the case of Samoan and Tongan students, we can learn how to teach them by learning more about who they are, how they see our subject, and how they have been taught in the past. The suggestions for teaching are only representative of the many techniques that can occur to teachers when they know more about those they are teaching. Whether my suggestions are adopted is less important than the efforts we put forth to understand

cultural gaps between us and our students. Once the gaps have been identified, the designing of bridges will follow naturally.

Notes

[1]Allan G. Reynolds and Paul W. Flagg, Cognitive Psychology (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers, 1977), p. 11.

[2]T. C. Jupp and John Milne, Guided Course in English Composition (London: Heineman Educational Books, 1968), pp. 16, ii. Jupp and Milne are quoting Wilga M. Rivers' The Psychologist and the Foreign Language Teacher.

[3]John P. Field and Robert H. Weiss, Cases for Composition (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), p. vii.

[4]"Reading the Unwritten Text," a presentation delivered at the Wyoming Conference on Freshman and Sophomore Literature, July 1, 1982, Laramie, Wyoming.

[5]Roger H. Garrison, "One-to-One: Tutorial Instruction in Freshman Composition," New Directions for Community Colleges, 2 (Spring 1974), 55-84.

[6]"The Effects of Observational Activities on Student Writing," Research in the Teaching of English, 13 (1979), 23-35.

[7]"Inquiry and the Composing Process: Theory and Research," College English, 44 (1982), 659.